

The American Weekly

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The Sunday Oregonian

WORLD'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL DOCTOR

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*Dr. Paul Niehans of Switzerland
is either the most successful medical faker
of our time or a research genius
long overdue for the Nobel Prize in medicine*

World's Most

JUST OUTSIDE the lakeside town of Clarens, not far from fashionable Montreux, Switzerland, you see the neat, overhead sign of Dr. Niehans' "Clinique Generale La Prairie" across the narrow side road. It is a well-traveled little path. Up this hillside road, according to informed sources, have come Somerset Maugham (then 76—now 85), artist Georges Braque (then 77), Gloria Swanson (60), King Ibn Saud (57) and Charlie Chaplin (70), who lives down the road a piece at nearby Vevey.

Down this road has come Dr. Niehans, himself, to give his treatments more discreetly elsewhere to the late Pope Pius XII, the Duke (65) and Duchess (63) of Windsor, Konrad Adenauer (83) of Germany and dozens of other prominent international figures.

"The General Clinic of the Field" is a well-kept three-story, light gray stone chalet that looks like a small Swiss hotel. Inside, several white-clad young women are busy in the front office. A duffle-coated middle-aged Englishman, fresh from treatment, mildly protests the size of his bill. In the pale-green walled waiting room, you can hear an American voice emanating from one of the private rooms opposite: "Say, nurse, do I get one needle or three today?"

The hypodermic needles the patient is referring to are used to inject into him millions of mashed living cells prepared from the unborn offspring of freshly slaughtered sheep. Several hundred thousand such injections have convinced Dr. Niehans—and quite a few of his medical followers all over the world

—that these cells have cured a bewildering variety of diseases, staved off the effects of aging, revitalized older men and women. He claims they have even prevented the onset of cancer in his older patients.

Dr. Paul Niehans is a tall, slightly stooped, white-haired man, remarkably youthful in appearance. Now 77, he looks as if he has yet to reach 60.

He has given himself many injections of fresh animal cells (to test them), following the New Testament injunction, "Physician, heal thyself." Before he turned to medicine he was formally trained for the Protestant ministry.

Why has he never published his results in a leading Swiss or U. S. medical journal? Every ethical doctor knows he owes it to his colleagues to let them know when he discovers a new and successful therapy.

Dr. Niehans smiles cryptically: "Why? Very simple. The results I have obtained are so fantastic that they would not be believed."

The doctor's home, Sonnenfels (Rock in the Sun), a two-story mansion (owned by Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia before World War II) is about a mile away from his clinic. The solid and luxuriously built mansion sits in the midst of many beautifully landscaped acres high over Lake Geneva.

Inside in the enormous drawing room hang several old masters—Van Dyck, Durer and Diaz. Underfoot is a huge and very expensive needlepoint carpet. But of all of his possessions Niehans is



Many an aging celebrity has passed beneath the sign—which means "The General Clinic of the Field"—to enter the hotel-like hospital (above) for injections of mashed animal cells under the supervision of the vigorous 77-year-old Swiss physician.



The fat fees that Dr. Niehans charges some of his prominent and prosperous patients have made it possible for him and his English-born wife to live luxuriously in this mansion once owned by Emperor Haile Selassie.

Controversial Doctor

By MURRAY TEIGH BLOOM

understandably proudest of a pair of gold cuff links and a framed black and white photograph standing on a desk.

The cuff links, bearing the keys of St. Peter, were given to him by Pope Pius XII. The photograph shows the late Pope, with the doctor and Mrs. Niehans, after the Pontiff recovered in 1954 from a near-fatal illness. He attributed his recovery to the fresh animal cell injections he received from Dr. Niehans.

Instrumental in bringing the former Protestant divinity-student-turned-doctor to the bedside of the spiritual head of Roman Catholicism was the head of the Pontifical Swiss Guard, Phyffer von Attilhofen. Until he was called in to treat the 78-year-old Pope in January, 1954, Dr. Niehans was not very well known. But with this patient's remarkable recovery, Dr. Niehans became a much-discussed man.

In 1955 he was named to a seat in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, one that had been held by the late Sir Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin. "Cellular therapy," as he calls his specialty, got an even greater push forward in 1956 when the Pope publicly endorsed the treatment before an international gathering of surgeons.

Dr. Niehans' position in Switzerland is a peculiar one. He is not listed in the Swiss "Who's Who," although he is in the German one, mainly because he has been honored by the University of Tübingen in southern Germany for his medical work.

"Only here in Switzerland," the editor of *Weltwoche*, an influential

Swiss weekly, wrote in 1957, "has Niehans' method of therapy not found favor . . . Like most pioneers in medicine Niehans finds himself faced by suspicious doctors. Most people in Switzerland first heard of him only from the foreign press after the doctor was called to the Pope's bedside in 1954. That Dr. Niehans cured the Pope cannot be proved. It is a fact, however, that he did not let him die." (Pope Pius did die in October, 1958, at the age of 82 after two cerebral strokes.)

Dr. Niehans' relations with Swiss organized medicine are sticky. His one known follower among Swiss doctors, Dr. Franklin Bircher of Zurich, was until October, 1957, kept out of the Zurich Medical Society. Swiss patients who visited him for cellular injections were harassed by questioning phone calls from Zurich's Public Health Department. But in the past two years Dr. Bircher has been "rehabilitated" by the Medical Society and there is, apparently, no longer any official objection to his use of cellular therapy.

But Dr. Niehans himself still encounters great hostility and jealousy among his medical colleagues in Switzerland. They accuse him of being a vain publicity seeker and of profiting from his "unproven therapy." A few weeks ago he was officially enjoined by the Vaud Canton Medical Society from giving any press interviews.

Dr. Niehans' minimum fee for treatment is 500 Swiss francs, or about \$125, which includes \$40 for the purchase of

the animal, the cells of which will be used for the injection. The animals are slaughtered at the nearby Clarens abattoir. Obviously the minimum fee is not charged very often. Wealthy patients generally pay much more. Two Zurich businessmen report that they were charged \$1,000 and more for cellular therapy by Dr. Franklin Bircher.

One Swiss physician, who dismisses Niehans' work as of no importance, says, "In America a doctor who sets himself up as a diet expert can make a fortune quickly if he gives his women patients enough injections. Well, here in Europe many doctors have grown rich giving injections of fresh cells. They've been so busy," he adds caustically, "none of them has had time to tell the rest of us why the cells should work or even how often they work."

On the other hand, Friedrich Holzapfel, the German Ambassador to Switzerland from 1952 to 1958, is now helping to organize an International Committee for Research in Cellular Therapy. It was formed early in 1959 and consists of the world's 25 leading medical practitioners of cellular therapy. Dr. Hermann Hoepke, widely respected Professor of Anatomy at Heidelberg University, is chairman, Dr. Niehans, honorary president.

"This organization," Herr Holzapfel explains, "will gather statistics on the effectiveness of cellular therapy from the five or six hundred doctors all over the world who are now using this process. So far the only figures we have are those of Dr. Karl Sprado of Frankfurt who has (Continued on following page)



Many people are ready to believe that 85-year-old Somerset Maugham added years to his life when, at age 76, he visited Dr. Niehans.



In Germany they call Chancellor Konrad Adenauer "Der Alte"—the Old One. He's 83, and another of Dr. Niehans' celebrated patients.



When Dr. Niehans went to a meeting of medical men in Rome in 1957 he had a chat with his most famous patient, the late Pope Pius XII. When the Pope publicly attributed his recovery from a serious illness to Niehans, the Swiss doctor became famous.



The aging Duke and Duchess of Windsor (they're both in their sixties) are numbered among the Swiss doctor's V. I. Patients. They did not make headlines by going to The General Clinic of the Field but discreetly had the controversial doctor come to them.



At the age of 78, the French modernist painter, Georges Braque, is a youthful oddster who had animal cells injected into his system.

Other Swiss doctors are suspicious of Niehans and accuse him of being a publicity seeker

treated 2,500 patients with cells. He estimates that his successful cases are 55% to 58% of the total.

"But we have other doctors who insist that their cure rate is much higher and there are some, I admit, who have tried it and dropped it quickly when they failed to get good results. But soon our organization will have reputable medical representatives from Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Austria, Italy, Sweden, France and Holland."

Why not from the United States?

Herr Holzapfel's wife, who once lived in Bayside, New York, and served as a nurse at the Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan, answers:

"Those doctors in America! They say if it wasn't discovered by an American it can't be much good. As a trained nurse I've seen many cases where cellular therapy literally saved the lives of men and women."

Dr. Niehans' wife is a slender, charming former Englishwoman. She was brought to Switzerland by her mother when she was 18. The Niehans have one child, a married daughter who lives in the city of Berne where Dr. Niehans was born and where his father was

professor of medicine at the University.

"In a way," Mrs. Niehans remarks gently, "it is just as well that my husband doesn't have the medical following in the States that he has here. Both of us love to travel and when we were in New York recently we stopped at the Waldorf-Astoria. No publicity, no interviews and no frantic phone calls from doctors who wanted to discuss some special case. It was a welcome respite." She, too, claims to have benefited greatly from her husband's therapy.

The "bible" of the Niehans' method is a little book, *Cellular Therapy*, written by the doctor himself.

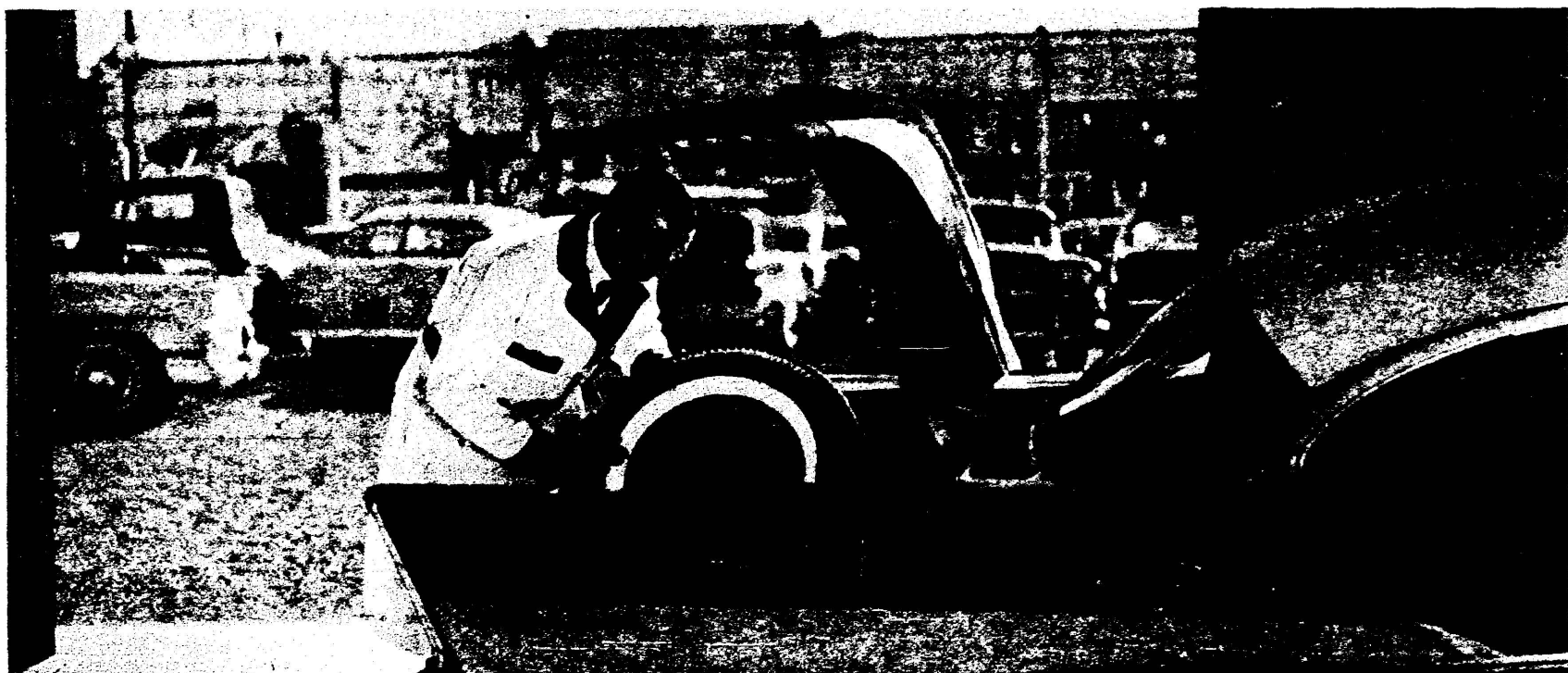
"Any American publisher," he says, "has permission to bring out my book without payment of royalties to me. In that way perhaps some American doctors will get a better idea of cellular therapy than from some of the nonsense that has appeared in some of the more lurid newspapers."

Briefly, the contents of the slim 120-page volume come to this:

There are 40 trillion cells in our bodies and each cell is "a carrier of life," a small-scale body which can main-



Seventy-year-old Charlie Chaplin (shown here with his fourth wife, Oona O'Neill, and five of their six children) is often pointed out as a potent example of what Dr. Niehans' cellular treatment can do for the aging.



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who is cashing in on an unproven therapy

tain itself, assimilate, change and excrete. All our lives new cells are being created as others die. It follows that a disease of the body is a disease of its cells. Cellular therapy can cure the ailing body by supplying the cells of young animals. The physician must choose the right animal organ from which to select the cells which can give the sick human body a new lease of life.

Hormone therapy already employs this principle since the hormones are usually prepared from the glands of cattle. But hormone treatment, Dr. Niehans says, is treatment without end. It does not lead to cure. On the other hand, a single injection of fresh animal cells can sometimes cure a physical disorder, he claims.

Until 1931, Dr. Niehans, who lists himself as a surgeon and endocrinologist, had considerable experience grafting animal glands into sick human patients, a now outmoded procedure. In that year he was sent a patient whose parathyroid gland had been cut during an operation. Dr. Niehans first planned to graft an animal parathyroid into the patient but he quickly realized that she was too weak to survive such an operation.

"What could I do?" he writes in his book. "I cut in very small pieces an ox parathyroid, placed the pieces in a physiological serum and injected the mixture in the patient's muscles connecting the arm and the chest. I thought the action would be... of short duration and one that would have to be repeated often to keep her alive. But to my great surprise the cellular injection was active a long time... after 26 years the patient is still free of the muscle spasms associated with a deficiency of parathyroid gland secretions.

"Very carefully I injected other organ cells in the muscles and they were all extraordinarily well supported even by weak patients. In this way I injected cells from all animal organs, taking the necessary cells from unborn animals or very young ones.

"In 1948, working with some colleagues, I found that by strong cooling and drying in a vacuum we could conserve fresh cells."

The preserved cells are mainly for older men and women and for diabetics, Dr. Niehans explains. He thinks that live cells would stimulate them too much.

How can he tell which of his patient's glands are working poorly? He has the patient's blood and urine analyzed in a Berne laboratory where they use a very delicate series of tests.

One specific objection of Niehans' medical opponents is that these tests are not as accurate or as specific as he claims they are. The other point of their skepticism is the vast range of his claims for animal cell injections. He says he has cured:

Pre-puberty dwarfism in children; insufficient growth of genital or mammary glands; obesity due to malfunctioning of the pituitary or thyroid glands; mongolism in children, and even mental retardation insofar as it affects speech development; the absence of menstruation; homosexual and lesbian tendencies; habitual abortion; high and low blood pressure; diminished sexual desire; signs of impotence; cirrhosis of the liver; weakness of the cardiac muscle; hardening

of the arteries; fatigue; memory lapses; insomnia and depression.

After studying this list, an American doctor exclaimed, "The old snake oil pitchmen didn't claim as much."

The fact is that Niehans claims even more. None of his older cellular therapy patients, he points out, has gotten cancer. Normally, at least one of every three of them would have contracted some form of cancer in later years. There is no outside verification of this extraordinary claim.

But, marvelous as they are alleged to be, Niehans admits that the little cells can't do everything. They are useless when they come up against internal infections. And there are other enemies of the young cells that the patient must guard against.

"Please do not have any X-rays, ultraviolet rays, diathermy, sun baths, Turkish baths, nicotine, liquor or any vaccinations," Niehans warns his patients.

In Zurich lives a hard-headed, practical journalist, a former patient of Dr. Niehans. His case history is interesting.

In 1956, he says, "I was 54, weak, depressed and subject to frequent dizzy spells. Doctors gave me the standard remedies of the time: vitamin shots, hormones and even the highly praised Russian ACS serum. Nothing worked. Then a doctor friend suggested cellular therapy.

"I got an injection of cells from a sheep's hypothalamus and its adrenal cortex. Nothing happened. I was no better and felt that I had been taken.

"Then, about 10 weeks later, I suddenly noticed that I could work harder and the dizzy spells almost disappeared. I got another injection in 1958. I feel 100 per cent better."

Asked why he hadn't written an account of his case, he smiled and said, "Who knows what it was? Was it the cells, the power of suggestion, or maybe just nature at work within my body? But whatever it is I think you doctors ought to look into this Niehans therapy. The good doctor could have stumbled on the great medical discovery of our time."



Gloria Swanson, another of the Swiss clinic's patients, is almost as glamorous at 60 as when she was Hollywood's brightest star.

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